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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1105
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0079
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RHMFIASS/COMUSKOREA J5 SEOUL KOR
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/18/2015
TAGS: PREL PGOV KS VE
SUBJECT: ROKG NOT PLANNING TO INVITE CHAVEZ

REF: A. BEIJING 17026

¶B. SEOUL 2746

Classified By: A/POL Brian D. McFeeters. Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (C) Following up on ref A and media reports that Venezuelan President Chavez will visit China August 22-27, poloff on August 21 asked Choi Won-seok, MOFAT's Deputy Director for Latin American and Caribbean Regional Cooperation Division, whether South Korea would be a stop on the Chavez trip. (NOTE: On August 11 MOFAT officials told poloff that they had heard that Chavez's Asian tour was recently canceled (ref B). END NOTE). Choi responded that Seoul understood USG preferences against a Chavez visit to the ROK before the U.S.-ROK summit in Washington in September. He insisted there were no plans to invite Chavez to South Korea.

¶2. (C) Asked if the ROK knew whether Chavez might visit North Korea, Choi noted that the ROK Ambassador to Caracas had asked Venezuelan officials but did not receive a definitive answer. One could never be sure about North Korea nor, probably, about Chavez, so a trip to the North was a possibility, he opined. Should Chavez seek to visit the ROK from North Korea, Choi said Seoul would not look favorably on grandstanding by Chavez at this time because the North Korean nuclear issue was complicated enough without introducing new actors.

STANTON